

# State of the City Address



**Mayor Eric Hogue**

**February 26, 2013**

## **Introduction**

Today it is my honor, privilege and duty to deliver, the annual State of the City address for Wylie, Texas. To review the past year, to reflect on our rich history of 125 years as a city, and how we plan to focus on our plans as we move into the next 125 years.

Our introduction video was created to remind each of us of how Wylie is not just a piece of land covering nearly 39 square miles, it is not just the Businesses, the buildings or the houses, it is our home...and we should take pride in our city and in the success it has seen over the past year.

A special thanks for Wylie Fire Rescue Color Guard for the presentation of the colors and for Police Chaplain Dan Rainey for leading our invocation.

As I begin, I would like to introduce our City Council members:

### **Mayor pro tem and Place 3, Kathy Spillyards**

- Lived in Wylie 26 years
- She is in her 6th year on the City Council and currently serves as our Mayor pro tem
- She has a full time job as a realtor

### **Councilman David Goss, Place 1**

- Has lived in Wylie since December 2001
- He is in his 6th year on the City Council
- He works in Procurement for DART

### **Councilman Nathan Scott, Place 2**

- Has lived in Wylie 6 years
- He is our Rookie member of the council in his first year in office.
- He is a Financial adviser for Northwestern Mutual in Allen

### **Councilman Bennie Jones, Place 4**

- Has lived in Wylie for nearly ten years.
- Has served on the City Council for four years.
- He is a Master Technician and Broadcast Manager for the City of Dallas Television Station

### **Councilman Rick White, Place 5**

- Has lived in Wylie for 16 years
- And served on our City Council for nearly 8 years
- He is the owner of 911 iMedia which collects and sells property damage information in real time

### **Councilwoman Diane Culver, Place 6**

- Moved to Wylie in 2003

- She is in her second year on the City Council
- Diane works for FM Global which hold 35% of the commercial property insurance market in the world

**Special Guests:**

- County Commissioner Cheryl Williams

A lot of exciting events happened over the past year where much was accomplished; even though we still faced tough economic times. The activities and events that occurred over this past year will benefit Wylie for many years to come.

I want to thank our city staff for a job well done. Our City Manager, Mindy Manson, continues to show her unwavering commitment to our city. For over 17 years she has served our city, first as Planning Director, then Assistant City Manager and in the last six years as our City Manager. Unfortunately she is not with us today. She had the opportunity to visit her daughter who is currently in New Zealand.

Mindy is a person who goes to work every day to implement the plans, programs and projects put in place by the City Council. She does not have an easy job with reporting to seven different bosses, yet she continues to successfully lead our staff of 300 employees.

Today I would also like to thank our Assistant City Manager, Jeff Butters, who also shows his commitment to our community; and today celebrates his 15<sup>th</sup> year as an employee of our city.

This year our theme is....WYLIE, TEXAS – HOME

What is HOME?

One definition is...

Home: The place where one lives permanently, as a member of a family, household or group.

So this past year...let's look at how we have cared for our Home!

First, let's look at **Home Maintenance**...

In Public Works:

The Water Division delivered 1,515,000,000 gallons of safe drinking water to residents and local businesses.

The Wastewater Division completed 174 service requests on sewer repairs. In the picture, you will note our new Vacuum Truck.

The Street Division completed 2,311 hours on repairs.

Volunteers helped city employees mark 130 storm inlet drains with “No Dumping” signs; and helped pick up over 2,500 lbs. of trash out of those drains.

These initiatives help protect the creeks and streams that receive storm water runoff from City streets.

Water conservation continues to be an ongoing focus for our city.

To that end, the Water Division places a high priority on finding and repairing leaks as soon as possible; and the City follows the same watering guidelines that apply to residents.

This past year, our Parks Division oversaw the planting of 471 trees and 2,858 ornamental grasses on the Highway 78 medians and rights-of-way.

They spent over 4,692 hours mowing; 2,299 hours on sports field maintenance; 795 hours on Special Events; and 491 hours making sure our public playgrounds are safe.

The city provided athletic fields and facilities for over 2,581 children to play in organized soccer, baseball, football, and softball leagues.

### **Now let's talk Home Improvement:**

In 2012, we opened our new Public Works Service Center.

We began the remodeling of our Public Safety Building...the old City Hall...which houses the Police Department, Fire Administration and Municipal Court.

Community Park was officially reopened this past year after an extensive renovation.

In 2012 the city also adopted a Tree Preservation ordinance to protect all trees on public land throughout the city.

City Engineering says that West Brown Street will be completed in the Spring of 2014.

East Brown Street will be finished by this June...if not earlier!

Stone Road Phase II will begin construction this summer.

Woodbridge Parkway/1378 will be under construction later this year connecting FM 544 to State Highway 78.

Meanwhile...the Planning Department issued over 238 single-family home permits with plans for an additional 605 new home units where families will one day call Wylie their home.

They also dealt with zoning for businesses which represent:

- 138,402 square feet of office/warehouse and institutional uses;
- 155,977 square feet of retail uses; and
- 57,787 square feet of entertainment uses.

The Planning Staff also completed an update to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan which outlays future needs and provides a direction of our city's growth and redevelopment.

All of these efforts aid us in continuing to BUILD A BETTER WYLIE!

### **Home is also a great place for Family Time.**

Did you know that 7:30 PM was the most popular time to work out at Wylie Recreation Center?

7,500 new recreation membership passes were issued in 2012; and 5,500 Day Passes.

89,000 visits were made to the fitness floor.

19,000 guests used the indoor track.

58,000 guests enjoyed using the gym for special events, for open play basketball and volleyball games.

8,500 guests climbed the walls in Wylie.

450 courses were attended by more than 3,000 participants.

13,000 children age 6 months - 6 years enjoyed the childcare area while mom and dad worked out or took a class.

60,000 miles were logged running or walking on the treadmills since Wylie Recreation Center opened last year.

Wylie Recreation Center is open 105 hours per week for our citizens and neighboring communities.

It makes me tired just reading this...

It was voted the "best place to work-out," in the Wylie News.

And it's an award winning Recreation Center:

- DFW Metro Area Parks and Recreation Directors Association Innovation Award for Facility Design and Construction
- Texas Recreation and Parks Society Region 3 Winner
- Recreational Facility Design Excellence Award
- Texas Recreation and Parks Society State Award
- Recreational Facility Design Excellence Award

But we also need to remember that Wylie is Home for people in all stages of their lives.

More than 3,000 registrations were processed for our senior citizen activities at the Bart Peddicord Center.

This past year the city introduced the Monthly Art Programs which brings children's activities for music and performing art, and painters displaying their crafts to our citizens from April through October of each year on the first Saturday of the month.

The Annual Arts Festival in December has become a major event in Wylie and the North Texas area introducing thousands of people throughout the Metroplex to Wylie and our unique quality of life and historic downtown area.

This year we will also host something new called Bluegrass on Ballard for our Wylie Jubilee on July 6<sup>th</sup> with a car show, Chili cook-off, Arts and Crafts, Food and a who lot of fun!

Art has become a part of our city...our newest sculptures under construction at Community Park, (Batter-pillar and Octo-pitch) are interactive pieces of art for all of our children.

This is just another way we are striving to make Wylie, a beautiful home. These sculptures will be dedicated March 23rd during opening baseball season at the park.

Now, we also offered a little Home Schooling in Wylie...

The Truett and Rita Smith Public Library continues to Inspire, Inform and Interact citizens of all ages.

Doug Moss, the architect who helped design our Municipal Complex, once described the library as a big family room, where everyone has their own space like the Teen

Room, Quiet Reading Room, Adult and Children's areas, study rooms, and computer labs; but that we all come together in the common areas.

Our Summer Reading Club Kick-off held in June brought nearly 2,000 children, parents, grandparents, and friends together to celebrate another summer of reading and entertainment.

Other programs, involving families and friends, were the Mad Hatter Tea Party, Comic Book Day, a Hispanic celebration with mariachi music, and the Zombie Prom.

The library staff thinks of the patrons as family and works with other organizations and city departments.

The library has also been awarded a special projects grant to work with our Police Department's Wylie Youth Enrichment Program this summer. We are really looking forward to this new partnership.

We also partnered with the Wylie News to have the newspaper microfilmed and digitized. This is an exciting project that will make local history available to all of us.

It was also a year of recognition for our Youth Services Supervisor, Ofilia Barrera. The Texas Library Association named her Texas Librarian of the Year.

The Texas Municipal Library Director's Association awarded us with the "Library in Excellence Award" for 2012.

Our Teen Librarian, Veronica McKay, served on the prestigious "Best Books for Young Adults" committee of the American Library Association. She read 300 books in one year. Many of these books were added to our collection or given to the WISD libraries.

Rachel Orozco, Library Director and Dia Rhoden, Children's Reference Assistant, presented at the Texas Library Association Conference.

They presented our Literacy Leapers Storytime program. This is a special needs summer story time for children with learning disabilities such as dyslexia and autism spectrum disorder. We were the first library in Texas to offer such a program.

Caring for all of our citizens, no matter their situation or challenges in life!

Most libraries offer programs 20 to 30% of the hours that they are open. The Smith Library offers programs 67% of our open hours.

The Smith Library is just another reason that makes Wylie such a special place.

Last year we had nearly half a million items checked out.

We added over 6,000 new library card holders;

And nearly 200,000 visitors;

It's always an exciting time at the library. We have a staff passionate and dedicated to the citizens of Wylie.

### **Now let's look at our Home Security...**

Wylie Fire Rescue continues to work to make our homes safer through fire safety education to every student in Wylie ISD.

This multi-year initiative has now been going on long enough that any student who is currently graduating from Wylie ISD, and has attended since elementary school, has participated in this fire safety program.

Our Fire Fighters responded to over 3,000 health, life, and property threatening incidents last year.

The goal is not only to remove or mitigate the threat, but to help people in our community recover and get them back to their new normal.

Ask any one in Wylie who has had experience with Wylie Fire Rescue, and you will find this to be the case.

Closely working with the new Lake Pointe Emergency Room, EMS services have improved during this year. Many calls can be transported to the local facility; enabling the medic unit to be available for another call quicker.

This private-public partnership has given Wylie more EMS resources at no cost to the taxpayer. Planning and coordination has been going on for two years to get to this point, and includes another medic unit available for emergencies in Wylie and neighboring cities coming on line in the near future.

Wylie's 9-1-1 center has greatly improved its services over the past year. Technology has been implemented to make the most of the resources available for emergencies. From GIS utilization...to plan for future fire stations...to computer-aided dispatch of units shaving off over a minute of processing time...to automatic vehicle location so that the nearest unit is dispatched,

With the remodeling of the Fire Administration area in the Public Safety Building we can better serve the public and handle emergency management needs with our upgraded Emergency Operations Center.

Wylie continues to be rated ISO 1. This shows the way the entire city works together to get the highest score possible as code enforcement, water supply, the 9-1-1 center,



emergency notifications, and the fire department are all evaluated to get the big picture for how we prevent incidents in our community, and how we are prepared to handle them if our prevention efforts fail.

### ***Police...***

In 2012 the Crime Rate per 1000 residents was down 13% despite a 2% growth in population. This is the lowest rate in over 5 years. This again speaks to the commitment of not only the Police Officers in this department, but also our citizens who have partnered with us to make Wylie a great and safe community.

The challenges ahead are keeping up with growth and providing the same level of services.

The increase in population not only affects crime but also has an impact on traffic and accidents.

Addressing those traffic concerns with existing staff will be a challenge. As our city continues to grow we must grow our Police Department to maintain those low crime rates.

Our School Resource Officers developed a program called the "Wylie Youth Enrichment Program." The program has been up and running for two years and was recognized in 2012 with the Texas Municipal League Award for its commitment to our youth.

This is a much needed program that needs expansion. The challenge is reaching more of our "at risk" young people with the limited resources available; mainly officers to administer and provide instruction to these young people.

The community has whole heartedly supported this program which shows the commitment the city and its employees have to make Wylie a safe place to live, work, and visit.

In every community there is a concern about drug abuse among not only our youth but also our adults.

In order to address this concern the police department has begun a process of developing a Special Investigative Unit to address narcotics issues in our community and surrounding areas.

This unit will investigate leads on supply locations and individuals, and work to make it very difficult to do business in our city.

This unit will be the enforcement hand of the approach along with a newly designated Crime Prevention Officer to work on the prevention and education side.

Prevention is the only way to truly impact this issue.

Just this month the Wylie Police Department was awarded \$86,000 for their involvement in the successful prosecution of a major marijuana distribution group operating out of the Dallas area. Those funds will be used to further investigative efforts in the Police Department.

Every October the city participates in National Night Out. The Police Department coordinates this event which involves many aspects of the community, including, local businesses, other city departments, and other agencies. This past year the city's event was recognized by the National Night Out award committee for our community involvement and commitment to safety.

The Police Department continues to work closely with Homeland Security and has designated an officer as a liaison with Homeland Security for sharing information and passing on intelligence on matters of local and national security. This sharing of information helps keep the Wylie Police Department in the loop of matters concerning safety of our citizens as well as matters of national and international concern.

Many of the challenges ahead involve keeping up with technology in law enforcement investigative tools, and staffing in order to keep up with growth.

Our community has become accustomed to a level of service from our staff, and the challenge will be to maintain that level of service while not overburdening existing staff.

Thanks to our Police for their outstanding service to our city.

As I mentioned earlier how we are striving to BUILD A BETTER WYLIE...

So what is the new construction out there, and why should someone come to Wylie??

Why Wylie? Well we can ask...some of our new businesses like...

- Rosa's Mexican Café...who had the best grand opening of their company's history...in Wylie, Texas.
- We welcomed Ross Dress for Less, Rue 21, Rack Room Shoes and Interstate Battery.
- When others said no to Aldi, we said yes, and welcomed them to our community.
- After 20 years, Dairy Queen returned to Wylie, and on November 3<sup>rd</sup> set a new World-Wide record in sales.
- We also have attracted businesses such as Rental One, Barco Pumps, Timber Wolf and Sweet Frog.
- We have had wonderful growth with Accend Custom Extrusion...Wylie born and Wylie Grown! Thank you to Jamie Rentfrow...this year's Large Business of the Year.

- I would also like to mention that today we are in the building that once was home of Savage Precision Fabrication. They chose to stay in Wylie as they grew their company now located in their new complex on Martinez Lane. Today, I am saddened to announce that W.T. Gardner, the founder and owner, passed away this past Sunday.
- And then...Medical Plaza of Wylie moved into town and brings with it a full service Emergency Room, Imaging Center, Dialysis Center, Pharmacy, Doctor's Offices and a Helicopter Pad! Over 52,000 square feet of medical services for our citizens.

And we are still growing...

- B & B Theatre opens April 25<sup>th</sup>. There will be nothing like it in the Metroplex. 12 screens, a restaurant...it will offer something for everyone!
- Kroger Marketplace
- Seattle's Best Coffee
- Race Trac
- \$24 Million Expansion at Sanden

All new businesses coming in 2013...and we've just begun the year!

December 2012 we had sales tax receipts representing the highest single month in Wylie's history...nearly \$751,000 dollars.

It is a wonderful time to be a part of our community, and we should be thankful to call this place home...

With the...

- Police Department's Youth Enrichment Program,
- Extensive volunteering and partnering with Wylie ISD,
- Chamber of Commerce luncheons, the Business Card Exchange and the Rodeo
- Rotary Club
- Lion's Club
- The Downtown Merchants Association
- Wylie ISD Education Foundation
- Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Collin County
- The Christian Care Center
- Equest, and many others

Today we are a city of nearly 45,000 people with over 13,000 students in our school district.

We have 10 volunteer boards in which nearly 70 citizens can get involved and help shape the future of our city.

Each year our city grows stronger as we continue to work toward the vision of BUILDING A BETTER WYLIE.

Ongoing communications is one of the major keys to our city's success as we continue to mature and grow.

In 2012 we continued working with our local newspaper, The Wylie News, and the Dallas Morning News Neighbors Go weekly magazine. We produced the *Wylie Living Newsletter*, that is included in your utility bill each month, to regular updates on the city website, to emails announcing the City Council meetings in which citizens can have access to the same documents and information the City Council receives, to the Nixle program in which citizens can sign up to get the latest weather and road closures throughout the city.

We now have our own Public Access Channel, with Verizon's channel 41. You can tune in to watch a City Council meeting, get news, information and updates about our city. This same information is also available on the city website as a streaming video.

These are just some of the ways we are communicating and providing a more open government to our citizens and our neighbors.

**Other:**

I have also had the honor and privilege to speak with students from Birmingham, Cox, Groves, Hartman, Smith, Watkins and Whitt Elementary, Davis Intermediate, Draper Intermediate, Burnett Junior High about our local government and how it works.

I have provided updates regarding our city to the Rotary Club of Wylie East Fork, Sachse Chamber of Commerce Mayor's Luncheon, The Lion's Club and The Downtown Merchants Association.

Wylie is an amazing place...it is our home and I am so honored to be your Mayor...I LOVE WYLIE!

Here is what Wylie means to me...Here is what I believe we have available to each and every one of us...

- We have a Police Department that not only provides quality policing services, but also provides programs such as the Citizens Police Academy, Teen Academy, Youth Enrichment Program, National Night Out, Neighborhood Crime Watch, and our officers provide the police department with in-house mandated training. The level of commitment and service to this community is unsurpassed.

- We have an innovative Fire Department that provides life and property protection at less than the average, not only locally, but also nationally.
- The Wylie Fire Rescue partnership with the business community is a win/win relationship. We have had approximately 4 major commercial fires in the last 5 years, a statistic that defies the national average that 30% of serious fires occur in commercial occupancies.
- Our 911 Dispatch Operators are now able to provide EMS instruction so that citizens on scene can begin assisting victims of accident or illness while the professionals are in route, which promotes a better outcome for those patients.
- It's not the buildings, it's not the equipment, it's not the police cars, or the fire engines that make a difference. Don't get me wrong...we need those things...but it is the people...the police officers and firefighters who have made a difference in protecting our city.

*I want you to consider what you have available to you as a citizen of this city:*

- A good night's sleep knowing that your neighborhood is being watched and protected.
- Security in knowing someone is watching out for severe storms and tornados.
- Knowing your loved ones will get the best of care if a medical emergency strikes.
- Knowing if there is an accident, you and your family have the best chance of survival.
- Understand that there is crime in any city, and yes, unfortunately bad things happen to good people. But even though our city has continued to grow in number, our crime rate continues to drop.
- You have a voice in the direction of the city; and the direction we are going is in response to the majority.
- Plans are being made for continuity of service for years into the future; no matter what the future brings.
- You pay the lowest rate on fire insurance that is available in the state.
- You have dedicated public servants committed to helping you on the worst day of your life.

- Training is on-going to prepare for the next challenge that your family, or the family next door might face.
- You are treated with respect and dignity through the worst situations of your life.
- In Wylie you can take comfort in knowing that someone is sitting ready to answer your call for help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year...with \$14,000,000 worth of people and resources to come to your aid immediately.
- You have competent, experienced, and credentialed professional leadership in place to manage the investments made with tax dollars from years past, currently, and investing in the future.
- Real professionals representing you in the competition for regional businesses, commerce, and project underwriting.
- Grateful employees that consider themselves fortunate to work for you; and who serve you wholeheartedly as well as professionally. And we were finally able to provide a salary increase after four years of faithfully serving our community.
- Service to all customers no matter what part of the City you live in, or what your past history, demographic, or social status may be.
- A library system in which over 30,000 residents hold a library card.
- A park system which enables 1,200 children to play softball and baseball, 1,600 play soccer, and 500 play football each year.
- A recreation center that was created as a service for thousands of our citizens to promote wellness and good health.
- A local government that is in compliance with all local, state, and federal regulations for your City.
- Removal of bone fide threats within our community, whether they stem from improper activities in a residential area, or a commercial/industrial area that could threaten our community's well-being.
- And knowing that we, as a City, are fully accountable for what we do with your money...which is why we began the trend of being able to lower your city property taxes this year.

If you ask me...Wylie sounds like a pretty good place...no wonder we are the third fastest growing city in Texas.

And when I think of all that Wylie has to offer its citizens, I want you to know that the thanks does not go to me as your mayor, or to the six city council members.

The thanks should go to the 300 city employees who serve a community that is nearly 39 square miles...the thanks goes to them, for their continual efforts to make Wylie the BEST place to call home.

**CLOSING:**

As we close today, I want to encourage you to be proud of our community and celebrate our accomplishments.

This past year, we reached a milestone of turning 125 years old. I wonder what those 42 citizens who voted to incorporate our town on November 8, 1887, would think if they could see us now?

What started out as a small community because of a railroad...to become a farming community known as the onion capital of the world...to a balanced community with unparalleled city services, an outstanding school district, industrial, commercial and retail options for all our citizens...

I don't know about you; but I would say "this a great place to call home".

May God continue to bless each of you and the great City we call Wylie, Texas, as we move forward...thank you.